

HEPHNER TV & Electronics

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February 10, 2012

Marlene H. Dortch
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th St. SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Compatibility Between Cable Systems and Consumer Electronics
Equipment, PP Docket No. 00-67; MB Docket No. 11-169

Dear Ms. Dortch:

From a retailer/installer perspective, allowing cable companies to encrypt basic tier channels – and, therefore, requiring ALL sets to use a Set Top Box – would cause a MAJOR disruption for consumers. The "Cox Box" is one of our greatest objects of consumer complaint.

Most of our customers' real-life situations are just like my house. I have 5 TVs. Three have set top boxes with DVRs but I also have a 22" flat panel on my kitchen counter and a 32" LCD hanging on the wall in my exercise room. For these sets I only need the basic tier channels – and I don't have room for a set-top box. One of the joys of having small, flat, wall-mountable TVs is that they take up less space and they are *wall mountable*. I know my customers and they would have similar problems if we now had to accommodate a box (whether or not subsidized by the operator) on *each* TV in order to get even the basic channels.

In addition, we have a multitude of customers who simply want basic TV at the cheapest cost. They are not interested in 200 channels...they only watch a few. They would now have to pay a higher cost for the same programming. (Cox Communications charges about \$5 per box on top of an \$11 "digital gateway" fee.)

A large segment of our customer base consists of those who are looking for simplicity. I can't count the number of elderly customers who, when I mention that they can get a cable box DVR for recording or to get HD cable channels respond, "OH NO, I want to keep it simple. I don't want to mess with another box or remote." And those who do have the box require a lot of handholding. We receive dozens of calls a week from customers who say, "My TV screen is black

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and says 'no signal'. What do I do?" We talk them through the process of turning on the STB and making sure they are on the correct TV input, etc. These consumer frustrations will only multiply if every TV in the house must have an STB.

CableCARD is not a viable alternative for those who want to watch TV without any set-top box. No major TV manufacturer still produces a CableCARD-equipped set. When they did a few years back it was a nightmare for us and our customers. As supported at the time, nearly every installation suffered from ongoing pixilation issues, dropped channels, pairing problems, etc.

From my perspective, keeping the rule that prohibits encryption of the basic cable tier is the most consumer friendly decision at this time and I can say with confidence that my customer base would overwhelmingly agree.

This letter is being provided to your office in accordance with Section 1.1206 of the Commission's rules.

Respectfully submitted,



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Cc:

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